

English Unit 4: Analysing Argument

Outcome 2 – Print text

Instructions

For this Outcome, you are required to analyse the use of argument(s) and language to persuade an intended audience to share the point of view expressed in a persuasive text.

- Read the background information on this page and the material on pages 2, 3 and 4, and write an analytical response to the task below.
- For the purposes of this task, the term 'language' refers to written and spoken language, and 'visuals' refers to images and graphics.

Task

Write an analysis of the ways in which argument(s), written and spoken language, and visuals are used in the material on pages 2, 3 and 4 to try to persuade the intended audience to share the point of view presented.

Background information

The Canberra City News is a local news magazine that has served the Australian Capital Territory for over 25 years. It offers news, opinion, sport, and human-interest material. It is available free. It provides a daily news bulletin and a weekly digital edition of the magazine. It has a readership of 330,000 a month.

On December 12, 2023, *The Canberra City News* published a comment titled 'The case for vaping as a least-worst option'. The opinion piece was written by Ross Fitzgerald, Emeritus Professor of History and Politics at Griffith University, New South Wales.

The comment is a contribution to the debate surrounding Australia's response to vaping and was prompted by the recent decision of the federal government to totally prohibit disposable vapes.

News location: Canberra ▼

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Canberra Today December 12, 2023

The case for vaping as a least-worst option



Many Australians with a severe alcohol problem will die from smoking-related causes rather than from the effects of alcohol.

OPINION: PROFESSOR ROSS FITZGERALD

HUMAN beings have always used psychoactive drugs. Some animals and birds, such as elephants and parrots, occasionally indulge in intoxication.

The international record of severely restricting the supply of drugs, or banning them, is extremely poor. Often, these efforts initially draw strong political support, but as nasty unintended consequences become overwhelming, support soon turns to opposition.

Most men and women don't recognise that alcohol is a drug. The prohibition of alcohol in the US in 1920 could not have happened without the strong support of the Women's Christian Temperance movement. However, a few years later, the rise of organised crime caused this same women's movement to campaign for the abolition of alcohol prohibition.

Although the term "prohibition" was used, it was only alcohol manufacture and sale that was outlawed. Consumption and possession of alcohol, obtained with the aid of a doctor's prescription, was legal. But demand for alcohol remained strong and when legal supply was severely restricted, Americans who wanted to drink bought alcohol from a rapidly developing black market.

The same pattern is being repeated in Australia now. Australian cigarettes are the most expensive in the world, with additional price increases scheduled for 2024 and 2025. Some Australian smokers have responded to the high prices by quitting. But an increasing proportion purchase black-market cigarettes.

Propelled by sky-high cigarette taxes, this soaring black market for cigarettes is now entrenched in Australia.

Smoking cigarettes currently involves the potentially avoidable loss of 21,000 lives in Australia and eight million lives worldwide, every year. This is not surprising, because cigarette smoke contains high concentrations of 7000 chemicals, including 70 carcinogens.

Sadly, the demand for nicotine and the purchase of cigarettes isn't going to disappear. This is why, throughout Australia, there is currently a fierce debate about vaping.

In the last parliamentary session of this year's federal parliament, there was vigorous argument about Health Minister Mark Butler's proposed legislation, which introduced even more restrictions on the capacity for Australians to purchase vapes and vaping products – currently the best means of helping smokers quit.

Just as it's well and truly time to take on criminal groups and outlaw motorcycle gangs supplying black-market cigarettes, it's also time the Australian government started encouraging cigarette smokers to inquire about other options.

Surely our state and federal public health policy makers should be guided by what will work best to accelerate the decline in smoking. They need to recognise that vapes are a safer alternative to cigarettes and can help smokers to quit.

The 21,000 Australians who die prematurely from smoking every year come from all economic and social groups, but low-income and disadvantaged Australians are over-represented. Many Australians with a severe alcohol problem will be among this group who will die from smoking-related causes rather than from the effects of alcohol.

As a sober member of Alcoholics Anonymous for more than 53 years, I am conscious of how common smoking is among alcoholics who have stopped drinking or who are trying to stop drinking alcohol and stay that way.

For decades, I have encouraged AA members (and other friends) to quit smoking, but these days I also encourage them to consider other options. As it happens, in this regard, vaping is by far the most effective and least harmful way to do so.

Ross Fitzgerald AM is Emeritus Professor of History and Politics at Griffith University and the author or co-author of 45 books.

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The original text can be accessed at <https://citynews.com.au/2023/the-case-for-vaping-as-a-least-worst-option/>